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- ART. V. — 1. *Autobiographical Recollections*. By the late CHARLES ROBERT LESLIE, R. A. Edited, with a Prefatory Essay on Leslie as an Artist, and Selections from his Correspondence, by TOM TAYLOR, Esq., Editor of the Autobiography of Haydon. With portrait. Boston: Ticknor and Fields. 1860.
2. *Memoirs of the Life of John Constable, Esq., R. A.* By CHARLES R. LESLIE. London. 1845.
3. *A Hand-Book for Young Artists*. By C. R. LESLIE. London. 1855.

THROUGH his various writings Leslie has become associated with the world of letters, as well as of art. It is very possible that his name will be even more widely known by means of his pen than of his pencil; for works of art, unless very popular in their subject, and reproduced by copy or engraving, are to be seen only in those few collections which are so fortunate as to possess them; whereas books, through the activity of the press, are indefinitely multiplied, circulating freely among all classes, and becoming familiarly known, even through widely separated nations. The costliness of an elaborate work of art places it beyond the reach of the multitude, but books can become the possession of all. Thus, while there may not be more than ten or twelve of Leslie's paintings in America, his writings will be welcomed at thousands of firesides. Probably every artist in the land will read what he has written, and very many who are not artists will derive from his pages instruction and pleasure.

Before the invention of printing, when each sentence, letter by letter, was slowly produced on parchment, so great was the value of a book that few could be purchasers; and, as was natural under these circumstances, few could read. At such a period, paintings and frescos constituted the wider medium of communication, and a work of art diffused more extensively than books the lessons of history or of religion. What a marvellous change, now that the illustrated page is scattered by hundreds of thousands through vast communities, hardly a member of which could be found without taste to appreciate and capacity to understand!

Thus the artist who can embody his idea in writing, as well as upon canvas, must exert an extended influence. There is a natural affinity between art and literature, and the same mind may express its best thoughts through both. Some of the sonnets of Michel Angelo are as remarkable as the marble that burst into life beneath his chisel. Leonardo da Vinci, among his many gifts, was profoundly conversant with science and philosophy, and proved himself, in several departments of thought, an accomplished writer. Sir Joshua Reynolds did perhaps as much, even for the advancement of art, by his lectures as by his masterly portraits; and, in our own country, Washington Allston, both in poetry and prose, has left that which is stamped by the peculiar impress of his genius. Many artists are undoubtedly wise in devoting their energies exclusively to the special branch for which they feel best qualified; but if there are those, who, in addition to their other achievements, can, through their writings, reach the public mind, they must thereby stand upon higher vantage-ground; and, in proportion to their ability, will gain the respect of mankind.

Leslie's writings are such as crown his memory with merited honor. They are characterized throughout by unexaggerated truthfulness, a genial and healthy tone, and an elevated spirit. There is in them no striving for extraordinary brilliancy; no blaze of epithet; no eccentricity or morbid egotism; no jealousy or bitterness; no foolish extravagance of censure or of praise. They indicate, throughout, sober discrimination and sound sense; yet there is no lack of true enthusiasm, insight, and power. They have, moreover, a colloquial ease and pleasantry reminding one at times of Addison and Irving. They unite a rare felicity of expression with purity of taste and manly independence. The same characteristics which marked Leslie socially as a man are perceptible in all that he has written. He has a plain straightforwardness, an honest candor, which disarms criticism, and calls forth a feeling of confidence and friendship.

Leslie's "Memoir of Constable" is a model of that class of writing,—lucid in style, unaffected, simple, and graphic. It is the lifelike portraiture of a beautiful character; the

history of a mind that loved nature, and was ever in harmony with her best influences. No one can read the work without acquiring a deep interest both in the writer and in the subject. It is easy to perceive that there was a kindred spirit between Leslie and Constable ; it is pleasant to follow them in their common tastes, to observe the attachment which bound them to each other, and the manner in which they helped to mould and modify each other's judgments.

Leslie is at no pains to conceal his admiration for his friend ; yet he never obtrudes his praise ; but, by the pleasant recital of facts and conversations, with selections from letters and journals, he brings us naturally into the circle of sympathy, until we feel united to them in affection, and participate in the same elevated tastes. We confess that this memoir has for us the interest of a romance. Indeed, the power it possesses is greater than could be conceded to a mere work of fiction. The reality of all wins upon the heart, till the experiences of joy and trial portrayed actually seem our own, and the noble perseverance and loyalty to duty awaken feelings approaching to veneration. Through good report and through evil report Constable adhered to what he considered correct principle in art. He willingly sacrificed immediate popularity to his convictions ; and when we perceive, in the midst of opposition and ridicule, the untiring devotion with which, in his pursuit of art, he studied the works of God, his course has an element of grandeur. The great error among artists of that day was an unwillingness to represent nature truthfully. In opposition to this, Constable sought to delineate nature as she actually appeared, with the fresh breeze and sparkling dew-drop. An artificial taste prevailed ; Constable determined to break from the thraldom. Leslie heartily sympathized with his friend, and gave to him, when at times it required some courage to do so, the most cordial approval and support. Whether Constable always succeeded in realizing upon canvas his own idea or not, no one can withhold from Leslie the credit of a worthy independence in his manly sympathy with his friend, and in his adherence to Constable, both within the Royal Academy and out of it, when so many were opposed to him. Under the circumstances, it displayed a genuine noble-

ness of character. As a tribute to the truthfulness of Constable's pictures, Fuseli, on seeing his representation of an approaching shower, called to his servant to bring him his coat and umbrella; while another declared that he could feel the wind blowing on his face. It is a curious fact, that while the artists of England were slow to recognize the merit of Constable, the artists of France no sooner became acquainted with his style than they burst into a blaze of enthusiasm, his works in that country producing an actual revolution in art. He united depth of observation with strength of feeling, depicting nature with lifelike freshness. He delighted in the most familiar objects. An old mill, a running stream, a meadow, a cottage-door, a village church, — these were the favorite themes of his pencil. Not the Vale of Tempe, with Juno or Jupiter, but some rural nook nearer home, with personages such as are oftener seen in the walks of daily life; the corn-field, with the simple ploughboy; the river, with its ford or ferry; the neighboring hill-side, with bending grass and flitting shadows, along which the laboring peasant is seen returning to his home, — such were the subjects dear to his heart, and which it was his chief joy to portray.

We can imagine Leslie and Constable together, studying with poetic fervor the open volume of nature, and, with a genius kindred to that of Wordsworth, detecting the truest beauty and the grandest thought in the most familiar objects. Sir Richard Steele, (or shall we simply call him Dick?) with keen satire, speaks of an author who determined to write "in a way perfectly new, by describing things exactly as they happened." Constable resolved to act upon the same principle in painting; — not to manufacture pictures at second-hand; not to rest in any feeble mimicry of the old masters; but to go directly to nature, transferring thence the very life and motion of things. Nature he loved with a constant affection. At times he would sit through the whole day watching every minute change in light and shade, in cloud and atmosphere, remaining often so still that the field-mice have been known to creep into his pocket. In this love of nature Leslie and Constable were in perfect sympathy, and it was Constable's truth to nature that Leslie specially admired. "Among all the

landscape painters," he writes, "ancient or modern, no one carries me so entirely to nature; and I can truly say, that since I have known his works, I have never looked at a tree or the sky without being reminded of him." The long attachment which existed between these brother-artists was honorable alike to both; and in Leslie's memoir of his friend, while he has raised a fitting monument to the character and genius of one whom he truly loved, he has unconsciously left, by the same act, an impressive proof of his own excellence.

In the "Hand-Book for Young Painters," we have what was first given in lectures, recast in a form appropriate to wider use. As lectures, they were delivered before the Royal Academy, in 1850, and were the earliest given at the Academy which were honored by the presence of ladies. Their clearness of statement, beauty of illustration, and force of argument amply sustained the reputation of their author, and gained for them a wide-spread popular reception. They are full of valuable suggestions. The writer, purposely avoiding the ostentatious use of technical terms, addresses himself at once to the common understanding, giving, with great transparency of diction, the result of much personal experience and close observation. He speaks independently his own thought, dissenting occasionally from Sir Joshua Reynolds, and at times from Ruskin; but, while true to his conviction, he never dogmatizes. His opinions are given with frankness, and the reader is then left to form his own judgment. There is no sweeping denunciation or scathing satire; but through every page there breathes a genial appreciation and generous candor. The discourse rises or falls with the natural feelings of the writer, who prefers to state his view with simplicity, and let it rest upon its own merit, rather than to attempt to dazzle by any false glare of rhetoric. This work is filled with able criticisms, and pervaded by a fresh and genuine spirit.

In the Autobiography of Leslie we have reminiscences of his own life, interwoven with recollections and anecdotes of the most eminent men of his time, with many of whom he was intimate.

Leslie's parents were natives of Maryland. His maternal ancestors were from England, his paternal from Scotland.

His father, at the head of a mercantile house in Philadelphia, with his family, was on business in London when Leslie was born, October 19, 1794. There they remained until his fifth year, when, in 1799, they returned to America. They sailed in an East-Indiaman, and were exposed to unusual danger, from the war then existing between the United States and France. Having passed the English fleet from the Mediterranean, they soon fell in with a French ship, with which they became involved in a severe engagement. Of this sea-fight Leslie always retained a vivid remembrance. So serious were the damages received by their vessel, that they were obliged to make for Lisbon, five hundred miles distant, where they were detained five months, and put to an expense of £10,000 sterling. After leaving Lisbon they encountered severe gales, and at length arrived at Philadelphia on the 11th of May, seven months and twenty-six days from London. His father died in 1804, leaving the family in rather straitened circumstances. At this time Leslie was pursuing his studies at the University of Pennsylvania. From his infancy he had been fond of drawing; but his mother, lacking the means to educate him as an artist, in 1808 apprenticed him to Messrs. Bradford and Inskeep, booksellers, with whom he remained three years, when a likeness which he hastily sketched of Cooke, an English actor, then popular in Philadelphia, attracted attention. Such was the skill which this drawing displayed, that many encouraged him to devote himself to art. Funds were liberally contributed by private individuals to give him the opportunity of visiting England, that he might gain every advantage which could there be found. While a lad in Philadelphia he had looked with admiration upon the pictures in Peale's Museum, and he states that the windows of the print-shops were so many Academies to him. Thus did his natural tendencies show themselves, and they received in this country the first impulse in that profession in which he was afterward to become so honorably distinguished. While he was in Philadelphia, Sully gave him a few lessons in oil-painting, and furnished him, when he embarked for England, with letters to Benjamin West, Sir William Beechey, and other artists. He arrived at Liverpool on the 3d of December, 1811, and was soon in London, of which he had "a kind of dreamy remembrance."

In Mr. Bradford's shop he had become acquainted with the most interesting books from the English press; and, through engravings, he knew the characteristic styles of the principal English artists. West's great picture of "King Lear in the Storm," he had seen in Philadelphia, and now he was to receive instructions from the artist, at that time President of the Royal Academy. Leslie — a boy of sixteen — entered with youthful enthusiasm upon the enjoyments and privileges which now opened before him.

He was soon established in rooms in Fitzroy Square, had visited the various galleries, formed a pleasant acquaintance with West, and numbered among his friends Mr. Morse and Washington Allston. Morse was about his own age, and Allston some fifteen years his senior. The name of Morse has since become associated with the Electric Telegraph, which, through his scientific knowledge and persevering industry, was introduced to the world, he having had the honor of establishing in this country, as a practical working power, the first line known to exist; since which, lines have been extended, till now they may be said to encompass the globe. During their early artist-life in London, Leslie and Morse occupied the same room, Morse painting at one window and Leslie at the other. In the dramatic world, Mrs. Siddons and John Kemble were at the acme of their popularity, and, together with Liston, Munden, and Matthews, were making Drury Lane and Covent Garden scenes of unprecedented excitement. Is it not probable that these wonderful representations had their effect in the works which in after life, through his pencil, found their "way upon canvas"? "Henry VIII.," "The Merry Wives of Windsor," "Twelfth Night," "The Winter's Tale," have all become associated with his masterly delineations.

Leslie's earliest instructors in painting were Sully, West, and Allston, all of whom, it is interesting to remember, were Americans. The latter, he tells us, was the first to awaken his perceptions to the beauties of color, especially as displayed in the marvellous productions of Titian, Paul Veronese, and the masters of the Venetian School. He soon became acquainted with Fuseli, and was studying the Townley Marbles at the British Museum, and the Elgin Marbles at Burlington

House. Thus did Morse and Leslie at that time employ their summer mornings. During the second year of Leslie's residence in London, Allston's health so far failed that he was obliged to leave London for Bristol. Leslie accompanied his friend, and while upon the journey Allston became too ill to proceed. As a proof of the devoted affection which existed between Coleridge and Allston, the moment that Coleridge heard of Allston's illness, he came to the town where they were, and remained until Allston was able to proceed. The house being crowded, Coleridge shared the same room with Leslie. On the first night, Leslie having a copy of "Knickerbocker's History of New York," then just published, Coleridge became so deeply interested that he passed nearly the whole night in reading it, giving frequent expression to his delight. From this time Leslie continued on terms of friendship with Coleridge, often visiting him at Highgate. In a note which Coleridge wrote, after Allston had returned to America, he says: "Why, my dear Leslie, do you so wholly desert us at Highgate? Are we not always delighted to see you? Now, too, more than ever, since, in addition to yourself, you are all we have of Allston." Leslie was impressed, as so many others have been, with the extraordinary colloquial powers of that remarkable man. The musical intonations of his voice, the vast resources of his mind, the richness and unending variety of his illustrations, and the spontaneous eloquence with which he expressed himself, threw an irresistible charm over nearly every listener. Leslie heard, both at Clifton and in London, several of Coleridge's lectures on Milton and Shakespeare, from which he states that he gained more satisfactory views respecting poetry and painting than he had acquired from any other source. Various pleasing reminiscences are related both of Coleridge and of Charles Lamb.

During 1816 Leslie was a student in the Antique Academy, at that time under the superintendence of Fuseli. This eccentric man generally entered the room in which the students were assembled with a book in his hand, engrossed in reading, the students, meanwhile, pursuing their work according to their inclination,—a course which Leslie, on the whole, considered wise: saying that "Art is to be learnt, not taught,"

and that under Fuseli's "wise neglect" such men as Wilkie, Etty, Landseer, and Haydon distinguished themselves. After the students had worked in their own way for a time, Fuseli examined their drawings, correcting them with his left hand, and often making remarks such as could never be forgotten. Notwithstanding his occasional violence of temper he was very popular with students. His knowledge, wit, and unmistakable genius, rendered him a general favorite. Fortunately Leslie knew what to avoid, as well as what to seek. Hence the wild spirit of Fuseli, which was at times lawless in its daring, spurning indignantly the simpler realities of life, did not exert an injurious influence upon his mind. Leslie, however much he might appreciate what was good in the qualities of another, never parted with his own sound sense. In speaking, at that time, of a picture by Fuseli, he says: "It is one of the most tremendous exhibitions of appalling sights I ever beheld. The figures glare across the picture like a horrible dream. He has certainly never been equalled in the visionary, and there it is he shines as a genius; but whenever he attempts commonplace he is contemptible." Leslie obtained two silver medals while at the Academy.

Edwin Landseer was a fellow-student with Leslie, — "a pretty, curly-headed boy." He attracted attention by his talent, and Fuseli, looking round, would say, "Where is my little dog-boy?"

Leslie's first large picture — "Saul and the Witch of Endor" — was purchased by Sir John Leicester, for one hundred guineas. In 1816 he commenced in a style and upon a class of subjects which became more and more congenial to his tastes. He had until now principally confined himself to the antique; from this period he entered upon the illustration of scenes from Shakespeare, Addison, Fielding, Smollett, and Goldsmith. Many of the characters of Cervantes, Le Sage, and Molière are also identified with Leslie's pencil. His earliest picture in this department was "The Murder of Plantagenet by Clifford," and he tells us that Sir Edwin Landseer (the "curly-headed youngster") sat for the pleading boy, with a rope round his wrists.

While the great controversy was going on respecting the

Elgin marbles, in which Haydon took a prominent part, Leslie showed his usual discrimination. He writes to Philadelphia, — the city to which he looked with strong affection, — urging the Academy to send for casts from these finest antiques in the world, just brought from Athens by Lord Elgin. “It will be an incalculable advantage to our artists, and their being in Philadelphia would make me quite content to fix my residence there for the remainder of my life.” “Tell Sully,” he adds, “that I entreat him not to lose a moment’s time in persuading the Academy to procure them. He will look upon their arrival as a sure prognostic of the rise of arts among us.”

Of late the merits of Turner have been so often and so ably discussed, and Mr. Ruskin, in his successive volumes of the “Modern Painters,” has written so eloquently, that it is pleasant to look back forty or fifty years, and see what is said by a young man, fresh from this side of the Atlantic, and without any previous elaborate criticisms from others to aid him. In a letter dated December, 1816, Leslie, after alluding to other artists, writes as follows : —

“Turner, however, is my great favorite of all the painters here. I went to see his pictures yesterday, and was delighted, as I always am, with them. He combines the highest poetical imagination with an exquisite feeling for all the truth and individuality of nature, and he has shown that the ideal, as it is called, is not the improving of nature, but the selecting and combining objects that are most in harmony and character with each other.”

In 1817, Leslie, in company with Allston, visited Paris; and thence, with Stuart Newton, went to Brussels and Antwerp. In a letter from Paris he writes : —

“The following day we went to the Louvre, and revelled all the morning in the richest luxury of art. It is impossible for me to describe my feelings. Had my whole life before been one of misery, it seemed as if this day would have balanced the account, and made me consider myself the happiest of human beings.”

We find Leslie during this year corresponding with Washington Irving, and preparing various illustrations for “*Salmagundi*,” “*Knickerbocker*,” and “*The Sketch-Book*.” “I have put the sketch of the Dutch Courtship,” he writes, “into the

hands of a very excellent engraver." A short time previous to this, Irving had been associated with his brothers in a mercantile house ; but financial troubles soon changed his plans, and he had resolved upon a course in accordance with his natural tastes, and was now devoting himself to literature. Indeed, he was just then embarking upon literary efforts which proved a series of successes and triumphs, reflecting honor alike upon himself and his country. "The Sketch-Book" was published in numbers, and Irving writes to Leslie : —

"The sale is very rapid, and altogether the success exceeds my most sanguine expectations. Now, you suppose I am all on the alert, and full of spirit and excitement. No such thing. I am just as good for nothing as ever I was, and, indeed, have been flurried and put out of my way by these puffings. I feel something as I suppose you did when your picture met with success, — anxious to do something better, and at a loss what to do."

At another time he writes : —

"I trust that you and Newton have a long career of increasing success and popularity before you. Of my own fate I sometimes feel a doubt. I am isolated in English literature, without any of the usual aids and influences by which an author's popularity is maintained and promoted. I have no literary coterie to cry me up ; no partial reviewer to pat me on the back : the very Review of my publisher is hostile to everything American. I have nothing to depend on but the justice and courtesy of the public ; and how long the public may continue to favor the writings of a stranger, or how soon it may be prejudiced by the scribblers of the press, is with me a matter of extreme uncertainty. I have one proud reflection, however, to sustain myself with : that I have never in any way sought to sue the praises nor deprecate the censures of reviewers, but have left my works to rise or fall by their own deserts. . . . I long to hear from you. How often do I miss you, in moments when I feel cast down and out of heart, and how often at times when some of the odd scenes of life present themselves which we used to enjoy so heartily together!"

Washington Allston was on terms of intimate friendship with Irving at the time of those financial troubles which swept away his property. We have often listened to Allston, on pleasant evenings, at his fireside, as he dwelt upon the noble spirit Irving displayed at that severe crisis of his life. At

the moment when everything had been sacrificed, Irving exclaimed, "Well, now I have not got a groat in the world; and I never was happier in my life." About this time Irving seriously thought of becoming a painter, and Allston encouraged him in the idea, and in their rambles together through picturesque regions they planned schemes for their common pursuits in art. But the pictures which Irving was destined to give to the world were those graphic descriptions on the written page, which can never grow dim with time. A large edition of "The Sketch-Book" was soon published by Murray, the success of which was so great that a thousand guineas were offered for his next work, fifteen hundred guineas for the "Tales of a Traveller," in 1824, and three thousand guineas for the "Life of Columbus"; besides which he received a fifty-guinea gold medal by direction of George IV., and an honorary degree from the University of Oxford. With such signal success, and the honors that ever after spontaneously followed him, it is pleasant to see the beautiful simplicity of his heart, and the manner in which some of his most popular writings had their origin.

Toward the close of 1821, Leslie made a delightful excursion with Irving into Derbyshire. They journeyed, chatting together, on the top of a coach, to Oxford. On the day following there was a heavy rain. That day suggested the story of "The Stout Gentleman." After this they visited Stratford-on-Avon, Warwick, and Kenilworth. At intervals Irving continued busy with his pencil, while Leslie was making sketches. Irving, seated on a stile, or on some stone by the road-side, still proceeded with his writing, every now and then laughing to himself,—and at times reading aloud to Leslie that they might enjoy what had been written together. The inimitable picture of the inn-yard on a rainy day was an exact account of their experience at Derby.

As an illustration of the sympathetic character of Irving's nature, and his affection for Leslie, we take the following extract from a letter, dated at Paris:—

"My dear boy, it is a grievous thing to be separated from you, and I feel it more and more. I wish to heaven this world were not so wide, and that we could manage to keep more together in it. This continual

separating from those we like is one of the curses of an unsettled life, and, with all my vagrant habits, I cannot get accustomed to it."

In another letter, he writes: —

"I often look back with fondness and regret on the times when we lived together in London, in a delightful community of thought and feeling, struggling our way onward in the world, but cheering and encouraging each other. I find nothing to supply the place of that heart-felt fellowship."

One of the pleasant facts in Leslie's life is his long-continued and unbroken friendship with Irving. This intimacy was alike honorable to both, and their correspondence, running through many years, has a charming freshness.

In 1821 Leslie was elected an associate of the Royal Academy. This naturally brought him into greater intimacy with the most distinguished artists of the time. With such men as Wilkie, Stothard, Flaxman, Chantrey, Turner, and Lawrence, he now mingled on terms of pleasant friendship; and Leslie, with his social temperament and appreciative spirit, was particularly calculated to enjoy such intercourse, and to improve by it. Trammelled by no narrow prejudice, goaded by no petty jealousy, he rejoiced in the popularity of those who were successful; while he was willing to perceive, and glad to honor, the ability which many had not the sagacity to detect.

Leslie was now fairly on his way to fame and fortune. His works were widely appreciated, and his society was valued and sought. Sir Walter Scott called to study his pictures while in progress. Leslie's pictures, so peculiarly his own, awakened general interest. His "May-Day in the Time of Queen Elizabeth," with its portrayal of rustic manners and joyous merriment, was a picture that Scott greatly relished; and very many less eminent than Scott relished it also. Another bright and sunny picture, full of life and character, representing the good old English times, was "Sir Roger de Coverley going to Church." These universal favorites were soon followed by "Sancho Panza in the Apartment of the Duchess." West, Wilkie, Constable, and the best artists of the time, expressed the heartiest commendation, while Lord Egremont, the Earl of Essex, the Duke of Bedford, and a host of others, were anxious for new pictures, and, what was more, were willing to pay for

them most generous prices. Thus Leslie might well be considered a fortunate man. He had the satisfaction (which all artists have not) of seeing his works at once appreciated, of being met with universal kindness, and of receiving, without the slightest personal solicitation, ample encouragement.*

In 1824 he visited Abbotsford, in order to paint a portrait of Sir Walter Scott, for Professor Ticknor of Boston. Of this visit the volume before us gives an interesting account.

In 1825 he became united by marriage to one who, through later years, proved a sympathizing companion and a devoted wife. Their domestic life was unclouded, continuing to the end peculiarly peaceful and pleasant.

The only thing to break the even tenor of his days, was his being appointed Teacher of Drawing at the Military Academy at West Point, — an office which he was led to accept in 1833, and on account of which, during that year, he visited America. But Leslie's expectations in connection with this position were not realized, and in 1834 he returned to England.

In twenty days after leaving New York, with unfeigned joy he landed in England; from which time, through a period of five and twenty years in that country of his adoption, he was surrounded by success and happiness. "I have known people," he in one place writes, "who I fancied would not be quite satisfied with heaven itself, if they should ever come there." Leslie was not of this class. He had no desire to turn exclusively to the dark side, to dwell upon faults and foibles, or to waste life in unreasonable complaints. It was this disposition, which, added to his fine tastes and agreeable manners, made him a delightful companion. He threw sunshine over the path of others, and he enjoyed the sunshine himself. The delineation he gives us of his friends — many of them men of distinction — is most graphic. An eye like his

* Lord Egremont voluntarily offered Leslie a thousand pounds for a companion picture to "Sancho and the Duchess," to which Leslie replied, that he could not feel justified in taking more than half that sum; and when, after the death of the poet Rogers, his paintings were sold at auction, one by Leslie brought eleven hundred and fifty guineas. A country dealer, not knowing Leslie, exclaimed, "Good gracious me! eleven hundred and fifty guineas for one of Leslie's pictures! Did you ever hear such a price, sir?" "Monstrous, is it not?" said Leslie, who afterward told the story with great glee.

could see quickly enough the failings of men. With his keen sense of the ludicrous, and his deep love of humor, few weaknesses or follies could escape his observation; but these were not the things upon which he loved to expatiate. He believed that friends were given for a better use than to be made the objects of censure and ridicule. If, therefore, there is nothing which can be said kindly, he says nothing; but as it happens, (fortunately for us, as well as for himself,) there is much which he could write, and which all can read, with unmingled satisfaction. Yet he deals not in fulsome panegyric. Far from it; he shows habitual discrimination. Every character upon which he dwells is both natural and individual. Through his lifelike descriptions, his friends become our friends. We feel that we know Constable, with his purity of taste, and firm, yet gentle nature; Fuseli, with his impetuosity, shrewdness, and wit; Flaxman, kind and scrupulously polite; Wilkie, modest and cautious, always deliberate, never impulsive, apparently grave, yet with sparkling humor; Haydon, with his egotism and dogmatism, alternately attracting and repelling; Edwin Landseer, the true gentleman, yet best of mimics,—he who can throw such pathos, vivacity, mirthfulness, over the animal creation,—we see him to be both dignified and mirthful himself. Here, too, we admire Stothard, preserving a cheerful spirit through a life of many sorrows; we become acquainted with Northcote, whose sharp eye was typical of his sharper tongue; we are amused by Chantrey, with his John Bull bluffness, yet pleasant and playful; and are astonished at the amazing genius of Turner, with his varied power and untiring industry,—shy in manner, yet, withal, frank and genial. On those varnishing and painting days at the Academy, when the artists dined together, Turner was the life of the table; with voice deep and musical, no one was more joyous; a recluse at times, yet truly social in his nature. So, also, we occasionally accompany Leslie on some of his pleasant rounds. Now we go to the well-known mansion of Samuel Rogers, with its splendid attractions, where we listen to the wise discourse of Sir James Mackintosh, and the brilliant repartee of Sydney Smith. We hear Tom Moore half recite and half sing his Irish Melodies; or Mrs. Siddons relate, with startling

effect, some dramatic reminiscence ; or Rogers himself tell a story with the same exquisite finish with which he would write a lyric. Or we breakfast with Sir Walter Scott, where we meet Irving and the poet Crabbe. We hear, perhaps, the Great Magician speak of the hunters who chase wild deer along the braes of Athol, or describe some wild pass in the Highlands, made famous by heroic deeds ; or we find ourselves in the grand old library of Holland House, while Lord Holland converses upon Horace Walpole and Charles Fox, or amuses those who will listen with recollections of Boswell ; or we are transported to Petworth, where we pass a week with Lord Egremont, and, in partaking of his generous hospitality, see how a nobleman can be doubly noble, and show munificence without ostentation ; or we step into Somerset House, and attend a meeting of the Academy, Sir Thomas Lawrence presiding ; or we stroll from London to Coombs Wood, and there, in the quiet shade, we stretch ourselves on the grass with Constable and Stothard, and watch the sunbeams as they tremble in the foliage.

Thus we make pleasant acquaintance with most agreeable people ; we listen to amusing anecdotes ; we hear now and then weighty remarks ; and have imparted to us, in confidence, as little gossip as could possibly be expected, — indeed, so little that we rather wish for more. It is plain that nothing has been set down in malice. In fact, we have enjoyed our visits so much, that we should not object to their repetition, and we congratulate ourselves that we have made such friendships. And this reminds us, just now, of one whom we cannot but mention, — Peter Powell, — to whom we are introduced in these pages. “ That merry, amusing, light-hearted, discontented little radical,” we do hope we shall meet again.

Before closing these remarks, it may naturally be asked what was Leslie’s rank as a painter. There is, indeed, a sphere of transcendent excellence into which only a few of the kingliest spirits out of the passing ages have been admitted. Michel Angelo, Raphael, and Leonardo da Vinci there sit supreme. As in literature, Shakespeare and Milton, Dante and Tasso, Homer and Virgil, find no one to dispute or divide their sovereignty ; so in art, there are unapproachable elevations

to which but a few of the most daring spirits have climbed, and these not altogether by strength of their own, but by those pre-eminent powers with which they had been marvelously endowed. Who can account for Shakespeare? or who believe that, by any process of culture, another like him can be produced? Such beings are not made, but sent; and they have a mission of their own. No exaltation so great is claimed for Leslie, — least of all would he claim it for himself. He had a just estimate of his own capacity. The same good sense which he displayed in everything else characterized him here. He did not exaggerate his ability, or attempt what was beyond his power. He felt that there was a certain province which he could fill, and that province he did fill, well and honorably. This was his wisdom. He did not spend his days in vainly striving to do what Nature and Providence never intended he should do. He studied his own gifts, and sought to make the best use of them; and in doing this, he achieved a good work, and gained his reward. Not to those lofty triumphs of ideal art which kindle within the soul the fire of devotion, did he chiefly turn his mind. Nor did he satisfy himself with feebly attempting to copy what he could not originate, by imitating at a long distance those heaven-directed masters who lift the mind into holy aspiration, and whose great works are so instinct with worship that they find their fitting place by the sacred altar, and in the temple of God. To a less elevated, but still to a noble sphere, he felt called. His mission was not so much to awaken directly high spiritual life, as to impart innocent pleasure, to suggest thought, and to give to cultivated tastes an added intellectual gratification; and, to his honor be it said, in all he did there was an absolute purity of sentiment, without the slightest admixture of coarseness.

In the mechanical execution of his work he slighted no detail. In coloring, perspective, and composition there was rare excellence. The accessories were harmonious, the grouping skilful, and the unity of idea complete. You could walk into his distances, and inhale the atmosphere in which they were bathed. He loved the good old English times, and the happy scenes of that day he rejoiced to bring back again through his magical art. But he did not dwell upon exter-

nals alone. He had a delicate feeling for nature, a constant perception of grace, and a keen love of humor. He painted mind, as well as costume. His forms were more than shapes, they were alive with soul. In them you saw the nicest delineation of character, the finest shades of feeling, the faintest dawnings of thought, the first tremulous budding of emotion. Every picture told its story. Each person was an essential part, and the most hidden motive was seen, while over all was the impress of reality, the fulness of life, the inspiration of truth.

Still, it must be admitted that his works were in some respects more the result of memory than of imagination. He did not so much actually originate what he represented, as illustrate the creation of others. His was rather a perceptive than a creative genius. He was an interpreter between the author and the world. Addison, Cervantes, Shakespeare, brought thought, feeling, wit, love, into being; Leslie gave to those aerial conceptions of their minds color and form. If he called spirits from the vasty deep, they might not always come at his bidding; but when with Shakespearian power they were called up, he had the eye to perceive their mysterious beauty, and the most subtle workings of their inmost natures were revealed to him, while, as in a magic mirror, he could render their forms, even their minutest expression, visible to others. To him they were not imaginary, but real beings. Certainly Falstaff and Don Quixote actually sat for their portraits. Most obligingly Uncle Toby twice came, with his usual good-nature, in his buff waistcoat, looking just as he did when he had that dangerous *tête-à-tête* with the Widow Wadman in the sentry-box. Here also truly are Robin Hood, and Maid Marian, and Littlejohn, and Friar Tuck. Nay, we actually look in upon Master Slender's courtship, and have a fellow-feeling for him as he sheepishly stands with his hat in his hand; or we behold Lady Jane Grey, as she was seen by Roger Ascham in the oriel window, meditating upon the open page of Plato. There she stands, lost in delight over Phædo Platonis, while the Duke and Duchess and all the gentlewomen are hunting in the Park, and smilingly she says, "I wist, all their sport is but a shadow to that pleasure which I find in Plato." Or we look again, and see the queenly figure of Victoria, or Anne Boleyn, or the lovely Beatrice.

Leslie acquired a European, nay, we may affirm, a world-wide celebrity ; and it is saying much when we add that he did so without pandering to a single unworthy taste or feeling. There is a pure and elevated tone in all that he did. If his aim was to confer pleasure, it was innocent pleasure. He showed how much of real interest may be connected with common objects, what a charm may be associated with domestic life, how literature may be illustrated and enriched by art, and how the customs of a past day may be brought before the vision for present instruction and enjoyment.

Mr. Taylor, the editor of the first-mentioned work before us, has performed his labor most successfully. His former work of this kind was the *Autobiography of Haydon*. A more complete contrast it would be difficult to imagine. Taylor himself dwells upon it with great truthfulness.

“Haydon,” he writes, “presents to us a nature all self-confidence, passion, and combativeness. He was exclusive in his theories ; reckless in his defiance of difficulties ; unscrupulous in the means he took to relieve them ; untiring in his appeals to patrons, and public men, and the public. Regarding himself as a martyr to high art, he claimed to the full all the immunities and indulgences that the most lenient and sympathetic judgment could attach to that position. Alternately elated with the most buoyant hope, and depressed by the deepest despair. . . .

“In Leslie, on the other hand, we see the man of cautious, trustful, respectful nature from the first. Slow in the formation of his judgment, disposed to defer to others in his art and out of it, but strong in principle, and apt to hold stubbornly to convictions once grasped ; not given to court notoriety or publicity, and rather shrinking from than provoking conflict ; asking only leave to pursue the even tenor of his way in the practice of the unambitious art he loved, among the quiet friends he valued ; equable, affectionate, self-respecting to the point of reserve and reticence ; valuing good taste and moderation as much in art as in manners ; averse to exclusive theories, or loud-sounding self-assertion in all its forms ; closing a happy, peaceful, successful, and honored life by the calm and courageous death of a Christian, and leaving behind him pictures stamped in every line with good taste, chastened humor, and graceful sentiment, — pictures which it makes us happier, gentler, and better to look upon, — pictures which help us to love good books more, and to regard our fellow-creatures with kindlier eyes.”

In another place he writes :—

“ How genuine all these qualities were in Leslie, is best shown by his life and by his character, as indicated in his conversation and his writing. How could *he* be other than truthful, lovely, charitable, and tasteful in his pictures, who, in his home as in society, in his teaching as in his conduct, was habitually sincere, affectionate, equable, thoughtful of others, tolerant, loving to dwell rather on the good than on the bad about him? It would be well if there were more lives that should show so exact a parallel of good attributes in the workman and his works.”

In 1859, on the 5th of May, after a brief illness, Leslie closed this life with full faith in a glorious immortality. He had always cherished bright and cheerful views of a future existence. To his son George he said, “ he thought it very likely that part of our happiness in the next life would be derived from finding out the wonders of creation which are hidden to us here.” The realities of that state of being upon which he had often mused, he was now soon to know. As he approached the change, his love of art seemed to grow stronger. He had several of his favorite pictures placed so that he could see them from his bed, and his son remarks that he never saw him enjoy anything more keenly than he did some photographs from the cartoons of Raphael. Thus did the art which had cheered him through the journey of life shed its halo around him during his latest moments here, and throw a splendor into the eternal world. He met his last change with that calm faith in God and Christ which was apparent in all he had said or done. The religion which, through life, had been his guide and support, gave to him, as he passed upward and onward, an unclouded and delightful trust. Nothing could alter his conviction in the Divine truth which was uttered by the Saviour. With his usual liberality, he declared that he believed that God permits different estimates of Christ’s character to exist in the world, that our attention may be constantly drawn to it by discussion ; and the following passage was found, written in his own hand, on a slip of paper attached to his will:—

“ I trust I may die as I now am, in the entire belief of the Christian religion, as I understand it from the books of the New Testament ; that

is, as a direct revelation of the will and goodness of God towards this world, by Jesus Christ, the Saviour and Judge of the world. In full reliance on the special providence of God, I feel sure that whenever, and by whatever means, I die, will be the best for me ; and I trust this belief will always make me patient and submissive to the will of God, feeling sure that there is no *real evil but sin*, from which I pray God to deliver all of us, now and hereafter."

ART. VI.—1. *Chemical Technology, or Chemistry in its Applications to the Arts and Manufactures.* [Article *Gas Illumination.*] By DR. EDMUND RONALDS and DR. THOMAS RICHARDSON. London. 1855.

2. *URE'S Dictionary of Arts, Manufactures, and Mines, containing a clear Exposition of their Principles and Practice.* [Article *Coal-Gas.*] Edited by ROBERT HUNT, F. R. S., F. S. S. London. 1860.

WE are not disposed to encroach upon the territory of our neighbors in the domain of science, nor to ramble beyond our own acquaintance with the grounds we are about to exhibit to our visitors. We shall only offer a few observations on a subject of general interest, as well in a speculative as in a practical point of view, and of growing importance in the daily life of increasing numbers. The manufacture of illuminating gas deserves attention, whether we consider the material from which it is obtained, the history and the process of the manufacture, or its many relations to the convenience and comfort of the community.

The numerous and great varieties of coal (from some of which gas can be obtained, while others yield no such product) are the evidence of a state of vegetation in many, and indeed in almost all parts of the globe, which was probably very different, in many particulars, from any present product of the soil and atmosphere. Of a woody and fibrous texture, coal contains ingredients which are not found in equal abundance in substances which now grow on the surface of the earth in a similar manner. Not only must the vegetable growth